

In Jacksonville, we celebrate Mary Littlejohn Singleton, who became the first Black woman elected to the City Council in Jacksonville, Florida, and then elevated herself to be elected to the Florida Legislature, the first one since the Reconstruction era. Singleton paved the way for other Black women to follow in her footsteps in the Florida Legislature, like former Congresswoman Carrie Meek, and our colleague, FREDERICA WILSON, who serves now with us today.

It is stories like John G. Riley's and Singleton's and countless others that remind me to work and lead us ahead in the future. We must think differently and act differently to affect change by working together to help our fellow men and women.

I am committed to standing with the Congressional Black Caucus and to keep the fight for equality for all Americans.

CELEBRATING THE 60TH BIRTHDAY OF OVERSEER ELVIS L. BOWMAN

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 60th birthday of my good friend, overseer Elvis L. Bowman, the senior pastor of the Greater Mt. Tabor Christian Center in my hometown of Fort Worth, Texas.

Pastor Bowman was born February 23, 1957, and became a lifelong member of Greater Mt. Tabor Christian Center and their congregation; and the church was founded by his father, E.L. Bowman.

Pastor Bowman graduated from the University of Texas in Arlington with a bachelor's degree in business and a minor in music. He has since used his education to serve the congregation in so many wonderful ways.

An accomplished musician, Pastor Bowman served as a staff musician under his father before being appointed minister of music in 1974. He then served as the Church business manager before he was appointed pastor in 2002. He was later elevated to full gospel district overseer of Tarrant County in 2008.

Pastor Bowman, I wish you happy birthday, my friend, on your 60th birthday. I wish you nothing but health and happiness. Please enjoy your special day.

LEGISLATION TO DEREGULATE GUN SILENCERS

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, on a warm Sunday morning, yesterday, six men in a blue truck and six men in a black truck began shooting along Griggs Road. Women and children fled. Families fled in fear of their lives. Because of the gunshot noise, police were

able to come, and those who were hovering and sheltering could dial 911 on their cell phones.

So today I want to join with the law enforcement coalition who are working with former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords and Mark Kelly, who are standing up against legislation that would deregulate and allow civilians to buy silencers.

It indicates that the gun lobby applauds introduction of the Hearing Protection Act. A quote in an article says many gun owners and sportsmen suffer severe hearing loss after years of shooting. Yet, the tool necessary to reduce such loss is onerously neglected and taxed.

What about the law enforcement officers who will suffer at the hands of those who want to do us harm with silencers on their guns? What will happen to those who will be murdered in the streets? What about them and their families?

This is a legislation misdirected. This is a legislation that is unfortunate. I join with my fellow Americans and law enforcement officers, first responders, in standing up against a nonsensical and misdirected initiative.

Let's stand with those who are to protect us and let's protect our families and not support this legislation.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, W. E. B. Du Bois is quoted as saying: "The cost of liberty is the less than the price of repression." And the cost of liberty has come at a steep price for members of the Black community. But despite this immense challenge the Black community has faced, our resiliency is what we celebrate every month during Black History Month.

Every February, we get together to talk about it, highlight it, and share with school children, friends, and family the accomplishments of the men and women who changed the course of American history. We thank these pioneers for expanding what we believed possible and use them as an inspiration for the fight that remains.

There have been so many African-American pioneers in every field, including medicine. Dr. James McCune Smith was the first African American to earn a medical degree and practice

medicine in the U.S.; Dr. Daniel Hale Williams owned the first Black-owned hospital and is credited with the first successful heart surgery performed by an African American; Dr. Charles Drew—many have heard of him—renowned for his research during World War II which allowed for us to better understand blood plasma and its storage for transfusions. More recently, Dr. Regina Benjamin became the first Black woman elected to the American Medical Association Board of Trustees and was appointed the 18th surgeon general by President Barack Obama in 2009.

Each of these medical pioneers broke barriers for the betterment of the community, and each worked to use tools of their profession to improve the health of each patient they treat and also for future generations.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services shared similar responsibilities, but on a much, much wider scale, Mr. Speaker. The agency, as you know, of HHS is tasked with enhancing and protecting the health of all American citizens. However, the recent appointment of Dr. Tom Price as HHS Secretary threatens to roll back the progress pioneered by Black medical professions and the progress made under President Barack Obama.

Dr. Price, as many of you know and as has been documented and seen on television on the cable news shows, was very hostile, extremely hostile, and openly hostile to the Affordable Care Act during the time that he was in Congress, despite the law ultimately extending health insurance for close to 20 million Americans who didn't have it before. That is what is so amazing that a doctor would take that view.

Because of the ACA, 2.3 million African Americans between the ages of 18 and 64 gained coverage, and the uninsured rate, among African Americans, fell by nearly 7 percent. In the district that I represent, 47,000 more residents now have coverage thanks to the ACA. And for the district that I represent, that is pretty significant.

People hear a lot about the Texas miracle and about all the jobs and the economic growth in the State of Texas. Despite living in Dallas-Fort Worth—one of the most vibrant economies in the entire world, quite frankly—it had the highest uninsured rate out of any congressional district in the country. It is a shame that, with that type of prosperity, we would have such a large group of people—over 1 million people collectively when you include people outside of the district that I represent—in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex who don't have insurance. It is really a shame. We cannot let the progress forged by African-American trailblazers be undermined by a Secretary of Health and Human Services who does not see how expanding healthcare access can help better health outcomes for African Americans.

Similarly, in an area of history where we saw historic tenures of both